

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application, as presently amended and in light of the following discussion, is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-4 and 6-9 are currently pending. Claim 5 has been canceled without prejudice; and Claims 1, 2, and 7 have been amended by the present amendment. The changes to the claims are supported by the originally filed specification and do not add new matter.

In the outstanding Office Action, Claims 5 and 7 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, regarding a question of antecedent basis; Claims 5 and 7 were indicated as allowable if amended to overcome the § 112 rejection; and Claims 1-4, 6, 8, and 9 were allowed.

Applicants respectfully submit that the rejection of Claims 5 and 7 are rendered moot by the present cancellation of Claim 5. Claim 7 has been amended to depend from Claim 2. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that independent Claims 1 and 2 (and all associated dependent claims) are in condition for formal allowance.

Consequently, in view of the present amendment and in light of the above discussion, the outstanding grounds for rejection are believed to have been overcome. The application as amended herewith is believed to be in condition for formal allowance. An early and favorable action to that effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

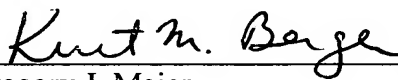
OBLON, SPIVAK, McCLELLAND,  
MAIER & NEUSTADT, P.C.

Customer Number  
**22850**

Tel: (703) 413-3000  
Fax: (703) 413 -2220  
(OSMMN 06/04)

GJM:KMB\la

I:\ATTY\KMB\246069US-AM.DOC



---

Gregory J. Maier  
Registration No. 25,599  
Kurt M. Berger, Ph.D.  
Registration No. 51,461  
Attorneys of Record